



## Dietary Requirements For Your Rabbits from **PARKSIDE**

Young rabbits have different nutritional needs to adults. They need higher protein levels to support growth as well as high fibre to promote healthy digestion. Young rabbits are very vulnerable to digestive problems, especially around weaning sudden changes in diet can be dangerous. Moving away from their litter mates into a new home can be stressful for a baby rabbit, which can also cause digestive problems. You should allow four weeks settling in period before making any major changes to a young rabbits diet.

The first step is to introduce hay. Unlimited, good quality hay as well as a fresh supply of clean water is an essential part of every rabbits diet and should be freely available. There are many varieties of rabbit foods available from muesli to pellet type foods. Muesli based foods are not ideal as they are very low in fibre and often contain additives which can play havoc with your rabbits gut. Burgess Supa Rabbit is a popular diet for your rabbit; as it is a pellet based food it prevents "selective eating" which happens with a muesli type mixes it also helps them maintain a balanced diet. Young rabbits should preferably be offered Burgess Junior/dwarf twice a day until they are 8months-1year as it contains higher protein which helps young rabbits as they grow. Then you can gradually change onto the Burgess Excel and start to decrease feeding to once a day to allow them to fill up on hay which is ideal to keep their teeth in good condition.

Preferably wait until your rabbit is about 12weeks old before you start introducing any fruits or veg as to much too quickly can cause problems; it's a lot for a small bunny's tummy to cope with and leads to diarrhoea. If any soft stools, constipation or anorexia occurs contact Parkside **as soon as possible**.

When introducing any new food, always do so slowly to avoid digestive upset. It is recommended to only introduce one new food at a time, so if it does upset the rabbit it can be removed from the diet. Only give small amounts and wait 24hours, if it isn't well tolerated (i.e. soft stools produced) withdraw it and wait till things are back to normal, then try again. Allow 5-7days before making any other additions.

The exact quantities given often depend upon the rabbit, so you may need to test your buns individual limits. As a rule an average 2-3kg rabbit should get 1.5-2.5 cups of fresh veg a day.

Please turn over for a list of all safe veg/herbs/fruit and wild plants. Stay away form all treats form pet shops as they are not designed for rabbits; try and stick to natural treats.

**POISONOUS – NEVER FEED:** - most types of lettuce, runner beans/leaves, rhubarb/tomato leaves, potato, frozen/wet greens.

In the garden: - Bluebell, daffodil, buttercup, fox glove, jasmine, poppies and tulips.

Most house plants are poisonous; keep them all out of reach and always make sure fruit/veg is washed before giving to your rabbit.

Last of all, rabbitS love crisps and sweets - we all do but high sugar foods are extremely bad for them in many ways and should not be given under any circumstance. Put it this way, you don't see wild bunnies nibbling on a piece of Battenberg!

Poor diet - poor teeth - shortened life!

Any queries regarding your bunny - please phone Shona at the Dundee surgery: 810777

## **VEGETABLES:**

Artichoke leaves  
Asparagus  
Baby Sweetcorns (but not full size ones)  
Beetroot (care with leafy tops as high in oxalic acid)  
Broccoli and leaves  
Brussel sprouts  
Cabbage (can sometimes cause digestive upsets)  
Carrots and tops  
Cauliflower and leaves  
Celeriac  
Celery and leaves  
Courgette and flowers

## **Herbs/Weeds/Flowers**

Cucumber  
Curly kale  
Fennel  
Green beans  
flowers)  
Parsnips  
Peas  
properties)  
Peppers (green, red and yellow)  
may stick to coat  
Pumpkin  
Radish tops  
Rocket  
Romaine lettuce (not iceberg or light coloured leafs)  
Spring greens  
Squash (e.g. butternut)  
Watercress

**FRUITS** (should be fed in moderation, due to sugar content – up to 2 tablespoons per week)

Apple  
Apricot  
Banana (high in potassium)  
Blackberries (and leaves – excellent astringent properties)  
Blueberries  
Cherries  
Grapes  
Kiwi fruit  
Mango  
Tomatoes (not leaves)

## **HERBS:**

Basil  
Coriander  
Dill  
Mint (peppermint)  
Parsley  
Oregano  
Rosemary  
Sage  
Thyme

## **Wild Garden**

Camomile  
Chickweed (astringent)  
Clover (leaves and  
Comfrey  
Dandelion (diuretic)  
Goosegrass (cleavers)  
Lavender  
Nettle

Melon  
Nectarines  
Oranges (not peel)  
Papaya  
Pears  
Pineapple  
Plums  
Raspberries  
Strawberries (and leaves)